

U.S. Officials Only

CONFIDENTIAL

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Southeast Asia

SUBJECT Chinese Nationalist Troops in Burma

PLACE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)

DATE ACQUIRED
(BY SOURCE)

DATE (OF INFO.)

25X1A

REPORT NO.

[illegible]

DATE DISTR. 8 MAR 54

NO. OF PAGES

NO. OF ENCLS.

SUPP. TO
REPORT NO.

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES, WITHIN THE MEANING OF TITLE 18, SECTIONS 793 AND 794, OF THE U.S. CODE, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS TO OR RECEIPT BY AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW. THE REPRODUCTION OF THIS REPORT IS PROHIBITED.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

25X1X

At the urging of the Formosa Government, Gen. Li Mi has described the situation on the Burmese-Chinese border and the position of the Chinese Nationalist troops. This paper until now has been distributed only in Chinese and in a limited number of copies. This report gives a condensed translation of it.

1. Since the 28 Mar 53, when the Burmese Government accused Nationalist China of aggressive intentions in Burma because of the presence there of Li Mi's troops, the attention of the world has been thrown in this direction. Gen. Li Mi himself has kept silence ever since he headed the anti-Communist work on the Chinese-Burmese border. He has neither held press conferences nor made other public utterances. Increasing mystery consequently has attached to his personality. The world has tried to break through this silence by spreading rumors about him and letting surmise run loose; for example, the press report that he had been killed in a sudden surprise attack. The Burmese Government spread about a report that he had been arrested while on a visit to Nationalist China. This report will attempt to clear up the confusion.
2. Characteristics of the anti-Communist United Task Force. The membership of the United Task Force is made up, as regards citizenship, of Chinese, Burmese and Siamese, and religiously of Mohammedans, Buddhists, Christians and those of no belief. They are all volunteers to strengthen the anti-Communist front in the struggle against the impending danger to their fatherlands. The Task Force accordingly is made up of free people and is an absolutely independent military organization. Although it is of Chinese origin, it is not a Chinese organization. Neither is it directly subordinate to the Chinese Nationalist Government. It is

U.S. Officials Only

CONFIDENTIAL

[illegible]

This report is for the use within the USA of the Intelligence components of the Departments or Agencies indicated above. It is not to be transmitted overseas without the concurrence of the originating office through the Assistant Director of the Office of Collection and Dissemination, CIA.

CONFIDENTIAL
US OFFICIALS ONLY

-2-

absurd to pretend that the Nationalist Government will assert aggressive intentions against Burma through this force. The question whether this anti-Communist Task Force is a Chinese aggressive force can easily be answered. The policy of the Chinese Nationalist Government is to be on friendly terms with its neighbors. The Chinese Government and people have always loyally sympathized with and supported the Burmese independence movement. Today, when the seat of the Chinese Nationalist Government is thousands of miles distant from the Chinese-Burmese border and it is preparing with all its power to recover its motherland, it has no interest or means to contemplate an attack on Burma. On the other hand, the Task Force has clearly set forth its position in a letter to the United Nations Organization, namely, that its only purpose is to combat Communism, which threatens its own life, safety and liberty. It further gave assurance that it had absolutely no intention of seizing the Burmese Government. The Task Force stands now on the Chinese-Burmese border and hopes that the free world will give it material and moral support so that it can later undertake still greater anti-Communist actions.

3. General Li Mi is the leader of the Task Force. It is common knowledge that he is Chinese and a pupil and subordinate of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek. As a Chinese he will acknowledge all commands and orders of the presidency and execute them faithfully. For example, when the president appointed him governor of the province of Yunnan, he accepted. But it must not be forgotten that the Task Force is not a purely Chinese Army, nor subordinate to the Chinese Government. All the plans of the Task Force have to be approved by all the peoples concerned. Consequently, should President Chiang Kai-shek summon General Li Mi as governor to report to Taiwan, he would return at once, but if the president should give him an order to withdraw with the entire Task Force from the Chinese-Burmese border, then General Li Mi, although he himself might do it, would not be able to execute the order because part of the troops are natives of the border. They know nothing about Taiwan and have no connections there. Therefore they would never obey this order and leave their homes; besides, they have all together undertaken the task of combating the Communists there on this ground.
4. The Danger of Southeastern Asia. What is understood here by southeastern Asia is India, Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines. These countries were formerly all colonies of imperialist states, chiefly England. After the Second World War they all, one after another, wanted independence. In the end, the outworn colonial policy has had to be abandoned in the face of the modern tendency of people everywhere. So the Philippines, India and Burma have regained their independence, one after another. Indochina and Malaya, if they have not yet achieved it, are in ferment. This general urge for freedom lets these countries incur the danger of running out of one peril into the arms of their liberator and helper, the new imperialistic Soviet Russia, which behind a mask of friendship makes use of the poverty and the undeveloped economic conditions and at the same time injects the poison of Communist ideology. Many peoples are already intoxicated by it, the Philippines excepted which are still to some degree secured by American protection while all the other countries already can be plucked by the Communists like ripe fruit.
5. India, after 600 years of unbroken colonial rule by Holland, France and Great Britain, recovered its independence on 26 Jan 50. Because of its poor economic situation, its great class distinctions, and its bad social conditions, poverty is extreme. The cities and villages are overrun with beggars. Such a country is

CONFIDENTIAL
US OFFICIALS ONLY

CONFIDENTIAL
US OFFICIALS ONLY

-3-

naturally fruitful ground for Communism. Shortly after India regained independence, its nearest neighbor, the Chinese mainland, was occupied by the Communists. India has freed itself from its imperialistic master, England, to be threatened instead by two still more dangerous neighbors. Prime Minister Nehru accordingly has quickly recognized Red China to ingratiate himself with the East bloc and imagines that he will be able in this way to keep his peace of the moment. He has not considered that this has given a great lift to the Communists in his own country. At the elections in the spring of 1952 the Communists won 27 seats in the congress, where they did not have one before, and the Communist Party in India has become the second largest party in the country. If this development goes on, it will not be long before the country is completely ruled by Communism.

6. Burma, since it regained its independence on 4 Jan 48, has not yet been able to achieve political unity at home because of the numerous party divisions. An example of this is the revolt of the Kuluns* and the resistance of the Red Flag Communists and the White Flag volunteer Communists. The Burmese Government has tried every means, through negotiation and through military measures, but has not attained its goal. Burma remains today completely disrupted in its domestic politics. The Kulun* folk constitute about 6 percent of the total Burmese population. They differ from the ordinary Burmese both racially and religiously. Many of them are Christians. After Burma's independence they asked for an autonomous administration, but the Burmese Government refused. This caused the revolt. The Kulun* fighting strength is about 10,000 men. Their main stronghold is west of Rangoon and in northeastern Burma. On the other hand, the Kuluns* are strongly anti-Communist; for this reason they work against the Communists on the Burmo-Chinese border along with the Task Force. This is another reason why the Burmese Government will not tolerate the Task Force. The Burmese Communists have had no part in the government since independence. They work against the government and control a large number of underground movements. They are divided into the White Flag volunteers and the Red Flag volunteers. The White Flag Communists are very inconsistent, working sometimes with and sometimes against the government. The Red Flag Communists have had ties with the Chinese Communists from the beginning and receive continuing Chinese support over the Burma Road. At the beginning of 1952 the Burmese Government decided to undertake something against the Communists. They had accepted American aid without regard to the opposition from the Left-wing parties, and had concentrated their fighting forces against the Red revolt. They had a little success; but it did not last long. After Red China entered into a secret agreement with the Communists in Burma, the Burmese Government bowed to Red China. It had to refuse American aid and attempt to expel the Task Force from the country, in order to ingratiate itself with the East bloc like India and preserve a temporary peace. On the other hand, the Red Chinese and the Soviet Russians made use of the opportunity and built up ever larger agent networks in the country. So the security of the Burmese Government is already slowly undermined. [* Karens -- (Ed.)]
7. Thailand. Thailand is the only country in southeastern Asia where the Communists have been unable to obtain a foothold. On 14 Nov 52, Thailand adopted a law against the Communists which punishes membership in the Communist Party with imprisonment for from ten years to life; spreading of Communist propaganda, five to ten years; sheltering and maintaining a Communist, five years. On that account the Communist attempt to penetrate Thailand has had no noticeable result. Thailand has also received American military assistance and a military mission to train Thailand troops. Thailand also works in close cooperation with the Malayan police to prevent Malayan Communists from infiltrating into Thailand.

CONFIDENTIAL
US OFFICIALS ONLY

US OFFICIALS ONLY
CONFIDENTIAL

-4-

8. Thailand's fighting forces are constituted as follows:

- a. Army: about 30,000 men, organized in two army corps and an independent division, and comprising altogether 28 infantry battalions, 4 artillery regiments, 4 cavalry regiments, 10 artillery battalions, 5 signal battalions, 2 antiaircraft regiments (of 2 battalions each), an armored regiment (2 battalions), and a transport battalion.
- b. Navy: about 700 officers and 9,200 men. It has 2 coast guard gunboats, 4 small cruisers, 15 torpedo boats, 4 submarines, 4 mine sweepers, and a number of other fast motorboats.
- c. Air Force: has about 50 piston-driven airplanes.
- d. Police: about 40,000 men, or more than the army, which makes the chief of police an apparently powerful person.

Altogether the Thailand fighting forces amount to about 100,000 men. Some 100,000 can be mobilized in an emergency, so that Thailand in the event of war can be a valuable factor against the Communists.

(sic) - Pridi - (Ed.)

- 9. Thailand also has its own worry, namely, Nai-Pih-Lih, a political opponent of the present Chancellor Ran-Pih-Wen, now living in Communist China, and prepared there at any time to reenter Thailand in order to overthrow the government. The Red Chinese regime announced in Feb 1953 that the 20,000 Thailanders living in Yunnan had formed a Free Thailand and People's Democratic Government. By this the first step was definitely taken towards an attack on Thailand. Nai-Pih-Lih formerly held various ministerial posts in Thailand. After the Second World War political power passed into the hands of Ran-Pih-Wen. Nai-Pih-Lih then fled to Yunnan and worked there with the Chinese Communists. *read: Phibun - (Ed.)
- 10. Indochina: The Communist threat to Indochina has already advanced to a state of open war, due to France's clinging to a colonial policy and Indochina wanting its independence. The Communists have known how to make use of this opportunity and come with a watchword of democracy and liberation to draw the country to them. The French and Vietnam Armies have attained no success, in spite of being no less strong than the Vietminh Army and much better equipped. This is because the people will have nothing to do with the French stiffnecked colonial policy; they would rather yield their country to the Communistic rebels.
- 11. Malaya. Malaya is an English colony with a population of 4.87 millions, of whom 39 percent are Chinese immigrants. The idea of freedom is in full bloom here also. Because England will not give up its colonial idea, the Communists seize the opportunity and stir up the people against England with the cover name of "liberation." The Communists at the present time can dispose of 40,000 men, against whom the 130,000 man police and military (of which English troops number about 22,000), wage a terrorist war in vain. If north Thailand is someday incorporated by the Communists, Malaya will not long thereafter be able to remain with the free world.
- 12. The foregoing all shows how urgently necessary it is for southeastern Asia to be made a defense front against Communism.
- 13. The anti-Communist Task Force. The seat of the Task Force is along both sides of the Salween River. One side of this area borders directly on Yunnan and Burma, the other side on Thailand and Laos. The total area is about 57,800 square km, or about twice the size of Formosa. This country is an undeveloped region which is

CONFIDENTIAL
US OFFICIALS ONLY

US OFFICIALS ONLY
CONFIDENTIAL

25X1A

-5-

still backward culturally. There are no means of communication of any kind, only high mountains and deep valleys. Dense primeval forests almost completely shut out the heavens. The animal life offers everything that the jungle has to show. The whole region is the most favorable possible for guerrilla warfare. The principal products are a special kind of rice, medicinal plants, and opium. It is extremely rich in minerals; for example, zinc, copper and precious stones. The climate undergoes great changes in the course of a single day, from midsummer heat in the daytime to winter cold at night. The rainy season begins in Jun of each year and it rains incessantly until Sep or Oct. The humidity is then so great and the fogs so thick that all life rests during this period.

14. When General Li Mi with the Eighth and Twenty-sixth Armies had to withdraw from Yunnan under Communist pressure, the Chinese mainland was already in Communist hands. His communications by sea with Formosa were already cut off. He had only two choices: one was to go through Indochina to the Island of Mainan (which at that time was still held by the Chinese Nationalists). This way he would not take because he was convinced that the French would disarm his troops (as later happened to another Chinese Army). He preferred to take the other way and reach the Burmese border in order to conduct a guerrilla war against the Communists from there and if necessary to withdraw to Burma. When he later entered Burma, he immediately made a statement to the Burmese Government, saying that today, where we fight for the freedom of the world, he hopes the entire free world without distinction of nationality will draw together to combat Communism. He has arrived on Burmese soil with his troops because he must spare his fighting forces in order to avoid useless sacrifice, but he hopes not to come into conflict with the Burmese troops or people. His opponent is Communist China only, and not historically friendly Burma. The Burmese Government preferred to believe that Gen. Li Mi and his troops were unfit for combat, and would disarm his troops. Gen. Li Mi was coerced for good or ill to enter into combat with the Burmese troops and was able to drive them back at once. After he had forced entrance into Burma, he was able to refresh and reorganize his troops in peace. Meanwhile other Chinese Nationalist bands that had already been dispersed in the mainland, followed, as well as many refugees who had been harassed in Communist China and could stand it no longer.
15. By the end of 1949 his strength had increased greatly. In order to unify the bands and volunteers that had fled to him, Gen. Li Mi laid down the following four points:
 - a. All bands are amalgamated into one anti-Communist Task Force whose leadership Gen. Li Mi assumes as Commander in Chief; Gen. Lu Guo-tsien and Gen. Li Tse-fen are deputy commanders in chief. Gen. Lu also takes over command of the Twenty-sixth Army (Gen. Lu is a cousin of the former Burmese Chancellor).
 - b. Native troops stationed on the border are consolidated and divided into battalions. They are commanded by native officers. These native officers know the country well, therefore they are required to care for the sheltering and maintenance of the entire Task Force. Procurement and distribution must be conducted with strict fairness. In this way the desired cooperation with the natives can be achieved.
 - c. Reception of all volunteers without distinction as to origin and nationality. What is important is that they fight for freedom and against the Communists.
 - d. During the training and preparatory period, strengthen the noncommissioned officers as much as possible and allow little contact with the outside world. So the anti-Communist Task Force is formed.

CONFIDENTIAL
US OFFICIALS ONLY

CONFIDENTIAL
US OFFICIALS ONLY

-6-

16. Now this Task Force has victoriously completed many small and five large undertakings against Yunnan. It has killed thousands of Communists, captured thousands more, and has received thousands of deserters. Communist China feels itself threatened by this Task Force; therefore it has various times attempted, with 300,000 troops, to destroy it, but has been compelled to withdraw without success after reverses because no great battleground can develop in this region. They must always stop at the Gan-Lu-Gung mountain mass. Since then the Task Force has not only become world famous, but it draws many volunteers from neighboring lands, and gifts come in from all over the world for its support. Today the Task Force keeps 400,000 Chinese Communist troops tied to the border area. The Chinese Communist Government, which sees that it has no chance of destroying the Task Force by arms, will now try to bargain it out of Burma by diplomatic methods, partly with force and partly by only raising a clamor against the Chinese Nationalist Government in the United Nations. On the other hand the Communists attempt circuitously to broadcast rumors in the French and English press and say Gen. Li Mi and his guerrilla troops will grab Burma in order to penetrate to a Burmese port.
17. In 1952 the Burmese Government again dispatched troops without combat experience, to persuade the Task Force to disarm. The conflict, however, did not last long and was repulsed. Gen. Li Mi has always made clear to the world that his enemy was Communism, and that he had no territorial views of any kind against Burma. The existence of the Task Force in this region is naturally difficult, especially as regards arms, ammunition and medicines. He has hopes the free world would recognize the importance of his existence there and afford him voluntary aid, especially with medicaments because they are entirely lacking. An anti-Communist college in the form of a military school has been established at Mon-Tse. Many volunteer teachers have gone there to give political instruction. The training course lasts three months, and embraces political, military, technical, medical and administrative knowledge. Mrs. Gen. Li Mi herself assumes the training of the sisters because she is herself a physician.
18. Burma's objections that the Task Force draws its means of subsistence from Burma illegitimately is entirely unfounded. The task force has not only authorized a regular purchasing bureau, to make purchases fairly, but the soldiers help the people with the cultivation of rice and other good crops, both with advice and action, so that a larger yield may be obtained, because in this region the cultivation methods are very backward. Also the charge that the presence of the Task Force may give the Red Chinese a pretext for marching into Burma means nothing, for the Red Chinese know well enough that if they attack Burma they will start another Korean War.

- end -

CONFIDENTIAL
US OFFICIALS ONLY

124.32 1L/E(3U)
124.33 3U(EL)